SB 962 The Middle School Curriculum

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of SB 962, an Act Concerning the Middle School Curriculum.

My name is Pauline Lake, from Hartford. I am a recent graduate of Trinity College ('13) where I double majored in Computer Science (CS) and Educational Studies. I currently work in the CS department at Trinity College, where I teach an introductory CS course, and I also work with Connecticut teachers of all backgrounds who are learning to teach and offer a new CS course in their schools (www.mobile-csp.org). I am also the current Secretary of the Connecticut Computer Science Teachers Association (CTCSTA, www.ctcsta.org) and the Secretary of Random Hacks of Kindness Junior, Inc (RHoK Jr, www.rhokjr.org). CTCSTA is a membership organization of K-12 teachers, some college professors and other citizens who among other things advocate for K-12 CS education for all student. RHoK Jr. is a non-profit that provides elementary and middle school children the opportunity to come together, along with CS mentors and professionals, to make the world a better place by addressing real-world challenges which are submitted by local organizations.

From a student's perspective, I know firsthand how powerful CS is. Before attending college I had never been exposed to the world of CS. I knew I loved being on the computer and using technology, but I never knew I could program it! It wasn't until my time at Trinity that I was introduced to coding. From the moment I started coding, the opportunities that came available to me were endless. I began seeing the relevance of CS in the world around me and my role in society changed -- I became a producer, not just a consumer. Looking back, I truly wish I had been exposed to CS before college.

From an educator's perspective, I believe that CS education needs to be introduced as soon as possible. The skills that students learn in a CS course are beneficial for them and for society. These skills include problem solving, critical thinking, and computational thinking. Developing these skills helps students work through challenges, both expected and unexpected, that they face in their everyday lives. Living in the 21st century requires these skills and knowledge of new technology, and how to program it, in order to succeed in today's society and workforce.

Help us prepare **all** our students for society and for life by ensuring that they have the opportunity to learn about CS and technology starting as early as Middle School.

Thank you,
Pauline Lake

Trinity College, CS Department
CTCSTA
RHoK Jr.